

MEMORANDUM FOR:

STAT

SUBJECT : Research on Religious Resurgence and the Dynamics of Certain Religions

1. Information available to us through the world's press and other sources indicates a strong resurgence of religion throughout the world. Almost every major religion has indicated the return to orthodoxy by large numbers of its adherents. Furthermore, there are many countries in which the influence of the local faith is having an increasing effect on political consideration through the "grass roots."

2. It seems to us that to deal with the total problem of religious resurgence and its effect on the political and economic life of the world would be extremely difficult. It would appear, however, that the problem can be divided into two parts: (a) the effect of religion on the political and economic scene in selected countries, and (b) the dynamics of selected religions.

3. Previous studies on the state of religion in a given country have used as the basic assumption the control of religion by the government. We are far more interested in how the government may be influenced by the religious hierarchy or by the people under pressure from their religious leaders.

4. Specifically we should like to know how far the present day "back to fundamental religion" movement has gone and is expected to go; what is the effect of this movement on Communist infiltration; is Communism being used by the religious leaders as the antithesis of faith in a supernatural god-head; what is the attitude of government toward the increasing power of such well-organized groups; and what is the attitude of the religious leaders toward attempts by government to coerce the religion and/or to adapt its actions to accommodate the desires of the church. Other ramifications of the problem will undoubtedly be developed in the course of the study.

25 YEAR
RE-REVIEW

5. The internal organization and dynamics of selected religions is of great interest. We should like to know the following:

a. The structure of the church: Affiliations of members; levels of clergy and their connections to churches, religious schools and courts; religious council or boards; supreme leader or leaders; etc.

b. Hierarchy: How do the leaders rise in rank and degree; how do they attract personal followings; how can a cleric be rapidly advanced to a high position; how is religious position recognized by the civil state; how do religious leaders influence the civil leaders; how can the hierarchy discipline one of its own members; how can the civil state control the hierarchy, etc.

c. Finance: What are the sources of funds? Who are the largest individual donors? Who among the clerics or hierarchy receives funds and who disburses these funds? Under what circumstances is the disbursement a means of creating a personal and/or political following? What is the status of the religious endowment (such as the WAF in Islam) in each country?

d. Factions: What are the sects and subdivisions thereof? With regard to subdivisions or factions within sects, are there conservative or progressive elements? Are there other groups formed around individual leaders?

6. As a pilot effort, we suggest that Germany and Japan might be fertile fields for country studies, and Islam and Orthodox Catholicism for studies of the dynamics of the religions.

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